The following eight pages are taken from Part 77, one of the Special Parts on SERMONS TO THE YOUNG.

Sermons to the Young.

On Guard

BY REV. SAMUEL GREGORY.

"Watch."—St. Matthew xxiv. 42.

If you were near the Bank of England in the evening, you would see a company of soldiers march into that gloomy-looking building. An enormous quantity of money lies in the Bank, and every night an officer with some guardsmen is sent there on duty. All night long soldiers keep awake to guard the golden treasure in the strong room of the Bank of England.

God has given to you all a treasure to guard. Your good health; your good conscience; the Holy Spirit within your souls, and many other precious things, are treasures which you ought to keep with greatest carefulness. If people lose things, or through carelessness allow them to be stolen, it is of no use to cry. Esau was a man who used to do foolish things without thinking of the consequences, and then cry and wish he hadn't done them. But that is like the girl crying over a broken milk-jug. It is better to think beforehand than to cry afterwards. Watch!

Not far from the Bank of England is the Tower of London, where, in a room, the crown-jewels are ranged behind strong bars. Money cannot buy, and money could not replace, these precious things that belong to our national history. How vigilantly the guardsmen keep that little chamber of treasure.

You soul is a little room full of crown-jewels. The jewels of innocence, and purity, and truth, and kind-heartedness are there. The golden crown of self-control is there. You must not lose these precious things. "Let no one take thy crown." Watch!

And not only for yourselves must you watch. You must guard your brothers and sisters, and do all you can to keep them from harm and sin. When one brother or sister is good and true and kind, it is well for all the home. You are your brother's keeper. Watch!

One time when our soldiers were fighting against Indians in America, a sentry at a very important point was found one morning dead at his post. The guard had heard no sound, and they could not imagine how any one could have come so close to the sentry as to kill him. They thought he must have fallen asleep at his post. Another man was put in his place, and next morning he, too, was found dead there. So the officer selected a sharp man, and said to him: "Now, let nothing escape you. Shoot at anything that moves. If a dog goes by, shoot him." For an hour or two the man heard nothing stirring. But at last a little twig snapped, and it seemed as if something was softly treading on dry leaves. The sentry's heart beat fast, and he strained his eyes, but could see nothing. After a second or two, he was certain something *was* coming near to him. He called out, "Who goes there?" but no one answered. The next moment he saw something black and was going to fire, but noticed that it was a small bear moving near a bush a few yards off. So he lowered his rifle, and was going to laugh at himself at the thought of how near he had been to raising an alarm about a little bear. But suddenly the sentry remembered the words, "Shoot anything that moves, whatever it is!" and he lifted his rifle, and let go at the bear. The bear fell, and the guard ran to where they had heard the report. On examining the bear, they found it was a bear's skin with a wounded Indian inside it. The Indian, night after night, had approached the sentry, crawling along the ground in the dark skin of the bear, and when near enough, had suddenly sprung up and killed him.

Now, you know very well that things come to you in life to do you harm—things which are called temptations. You do not notice them, they come so quietly, and spring so suddenly. You have to be warned, and put on the alert. Bad companions, and bad tempers, and bad and angry thoughts are like the Indian in the bear's skin. People are overcome by them before they are aware. This is the great sentinel duty of life, to watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Watch!

At Newcastle, a fireman named Murphy lost his life at a chemical warehouse. I will tell you one story about him while he lived in London. A fire had broken out in a tenement house of four or five storeys in height, and, working its way upward, had almost destroyed the building, when suddenly the face of a woman appeared at one of the top windows. Any possibility of escape or rescue from below was out of the question, and there was only one way open. Between the top of the wall of the house where the fire originated and the adjoining building, which had also caught fire, was an iron girder, nine yards in length, and not more than a foot wide. This girder was almost red-hot, but suddenly a fireman appeared upon it, and, amid the almost absolute silence of the crowd, walked slowly across it and disappeared into the burning garret. A moment later he was on the girder again with the woman in his arms, and stepping boldly on to the heated iron, where the slightest slip would have meant a frightful death, he carried his burden safely across, and brought the woman to the ground in safety amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the crowd, but not until his boots had been burned off his feet.

This brave man rushed into a chemical warehouse in Newcastle, where some poisonous gases were liberated by a fire, and the fumes made him insensible, and so resulted in his death. It is sad to think that a good man, who was always so ready to help and to save, should thus lose his life. But his life is a great lesson, and, like him, you ought to be always on the look-out for the good that you can do.

During the Indian mutiny, some English people were besieged by Sepoys at Lucknow. As they waited in peril, wondering if any help would come, a quick-eared Scotch girl caught the sound of bagpipes. She listened, and recognised the tune that was being played. It was the war-cry of the Campbells, and she told her companions that help was coming. What joy filled their hearts! In a little while Havelock was there with his men, and all danger was over.

So while we watch, and watch, and do all we can to take care of ourselves and of others, and to catch the chances of doing whatever good we can, let us remember that God is our helper. We can do nothing without Him. Jesus, Who told us to watch, is always near to fight for us. So let us *pray* as well as watch, and watch constantly for the help of His Great Power.

The Talents and Pounds

BY REV. J. M. NEALE, D.D.

"*And unto one he gave five talents*," *etc.*—*St. Matthew xxv. 15.*

We must always take this Parable, and that of the Ten Pounds in St. Luke together. They are not only different in themselves, but they were spoken at different times, and to different sets of persons. St. Luke's was delivered in our dear Lord's last going up to Jerusalem, but before His entry into the city on Palm Sunday; and it was spoken to the multitude, "because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear"; the Apostles probably thought so themselves. No; that Kingdom would come, would come gloriously at last; but many a long century had first to pass by, many a suffering to be borne, many a brave act of love to be done by the Church first. And the servants were not to sit idly waiting their Lord's return. His command, His parting command, to His servants is exactly what He says to all of you now,

"Occupy till I come." Make the best use of all the powers, all the advantages, all the help I give you, while I am absent, that so, at My return, I may receive Mine own with usury, and you may inherit the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

The other Parable was spoken to the Apostles, and to them alone, while He sat on the Mount of Olives on the Tuesday in Holy Week. We shall hear more about this presently.

"Unto one He gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." You know, my children, that that is true of you. One never can go into a school of any kind, one can never hear an examination of any kind, without being reminded of this Parable. Some of you are cleverer than others; some of you have had greater advantages before you came here; some of you have better health and more strength. And one other talent God, Who foresees all things, has given to each one of you differently—though how, and how differently, we shall not know in this world—I mean, longer or shorter life. But be your talents more or less, still it is, "Occupy till I come." I hope that some of you, at all events, have been trying to keep that in mind during the last half year; that you have been trying to do your best in your lessons of whatever kind; that, when you go out into life, you may be able to do Him the better service Who may come at any moment, and Who certainly will come at last. Then it matters comparatively little who has the five talents, who the two, who the one.

But notice that, in St. Luke, they all receive the same. So the two Parables put together teach two different lessons, which could not so well be taught in one story only; that of the Talents, that, as our dear Lord has given us, so He will expect from us, that to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: that of the Pounds, that, of the same powers, different persons, even among God's true servants, will make, some more, some less, use; and that he who makes the most of what he has here, shall have the higher reward there. "One star," you know, "differeth from another star in glory."

See something else. Why, in one Parable do we read of Talents, in another of Pounds? A talent of silver was worth two hundred and forty-three of our pounds. A pound of silver was worth four of our pounds. The difference between what the first servant received in St. Matthew, and all in St. Luke, is, therefore, enormous: the one had £1,215, the others only £4. Now, as we saw just now, the Parable of the Talents was spoken to those Apostles on whom He bestowed greater graces and gifts than on any other of His servants: to them, therefore, He speaks of talents. The Parable of the Pounds was spoken to the common multitude, to whom He had given His common gifts only: and to them He therefore speaks of pounds.

The next thing is, that the Lord of those servants straightway took his journey. Here the Parable does not keep quite close to the order of things. The Lord first, you see, gives his gifts and then departs; our Master first departed on Ascension Day, before He sent down His gifts on Whitsun Day.

In St. Luke, where the Master was a nobleman, gone to receive for himself a Kingdom, we have something else. His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Now, we may sometimes learn a great truth from the writings of a wicked man. A certain infidel, trying to turn the Parable into ridicule, says: "Why, what a fool this nobleman must have been, if he was in such danger from his fellow-citizens, to give his servants pounds, instead of swords!" Exactly. That is the way in which the world looks at the question. That was the way St. Peter looked at it before the Day of Pentecost, when he drew his sword, and smote the High Priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. But we know, or ought to know, that it is still, quiet work that our Master chiefly demands from us. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

Well ; two of the servants went and traded with their Lord's money. Let us leave them for the present to what, we all know it, must be a work of time : to their being instant in season, and out of season ; to their ever remembering that great and strict account that they would some day have to render. Now, as to him that had received the one Talent. Take the two Parables together. The one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money : the other laid it up in a napkin. In the first place, this beautifully comes in with the story. A talent was far too large a mass of silver to be concealed in a napkin. If it were to be hidden at all, it could only be so hidden by being buried. But there is a far deeper meaning than this. The talent was hidden in the earth, that is, the gifts God gives such and such a man are employed about the things of this earth : the cares of this world, and deceitfulness of riches, to quote our dear Lord's words in another place. But the pound was delicately, softly laid up in a napkin. And this refers more precisely to that which is so common a temptation to girls. St. Paul says to St. Timothy, "Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Now, when any of you allow yourselves to lie in bed to the very last moment, because it is so very comfortable, thereby perhaps giving up altogether, or anyhow shortening, your morning prayers ; if any of you, in the winter, when the time has come for some active duty, won't get away from lingering over the fire, because, you know, it is so very cold ; if any of you, engaged in reading a story, won't lay it aside at the exact time, because "anyhow, I'll just finish this chapter," this is not enduring hardness, this is laying up your pound in a napkin. And yet notice, that the account of the servant went far beyond this. By reason of the frailty of our mortal nature, we cannot always stand upright. He did not, just now and then, lay that pound aside. His own words were, "Lord, behold, there is Thy Pound which I have *kept*."

It goes on : "After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." Ah, my children, I know well how, at your age, if you could be assured that your lives would attain the threescore and ten, what an enormous length of time that would seem. I remember how it appeared so to me. But now that I am more than half-way between the age of the oldest of you, and the seventy years, you can hardly believe how short all the past seems. But, long or short, at last "the Lord of those servants cometh."

And see this : the two faithful servants go out, as it were, to meet Him. This is what St. John means, where he says, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment." This is what St. John's blessed Master means, when He says, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh."

And next compare the speech of the servants as given in St. Matthew with that in St. Luke. In St. Matthew it is, "Behold I have gained." In St. Luke, "Lord, Thy Pound hath gained." Is not this exactly what St. Paul tells us, where he says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me?"

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It has been very beautifully said that here on earth, when we are happiest, joy enters into us, as wine into a glass or bottle : there we shall enter into joy, as a ship into the boundless sea.

Then, hanging back to the last, comes the slothful servant. And he begins with an excuse : "Lord, I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strawed." See how he not only tries to excuse himself, but throws the blame on His Lord. Was it not so in the first excuse ever made in the world? "Hast thou eaten of the tree?" Adam not only throws the blame on his wife. "The woman gave me of the tree" ; but he casts it partly on God, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me" ; as much as to say, If Thou hadst not given me Eve, I should not have fallen into this sin.

"Lo, there Thou hast that is Thine." Nay, not so. His Lord had indeed what once was His; but not what ought to have been His now. All that that talent might have brought him in, was due to him exactly as much as that first original talent. But it is much more than so. It could scarcely have been taught in this Parable; but we know how true it is. In the dreadful Day of Judgment, no man will be able to say, "These, Lord, are my talents. It is true, I have done no good with them; but neither have I done any harm." If you have not done good, you must have done harm. Our Christian life is not like ascending a mountain, where, if you sit down to rest, though certainly you are not getting on, neither are you going back. No: it is like a man rowing on a swift stream, and *against* the stream. If he leans on his oars, he does not make way manifestly. But is that all? No; he is drifting down.

There is an Eastern allegory which sets out this truth very beautifully. A man, who was about to take a long journey, had two sacks of corn. He gave them into the charge of two friends—one to one, one to the other—requesting these friends to take care of them for him. In due time he came back. Going to the first friend, he said, "Where is my corn?" "All safe," he answers; "I tied up the mouth of the sack, and put it in a cellar. Take it again." It was brought out and opened; and there it was, mildewed, rotten, and utterly worthless. He went to the second: "Where is my corn?" "Come out with me, and I will show you." He took the man into a field all waving with golden wheat: "*There* is your corn." Then said the owner to the first friend, "Take your reward; the sack of mildewed wheat you gave to me": to the second, "Give me back one sack of corn when the grain is thrashed out, and all the rest is your own."

Now hear the Lord's answer: "Thou wicked and slothful servant." Wicked, because he had slandered his Lord; slothful, plainly. But where it goes on, "Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed"; we must not for one moment think that the Lord allowed the truth of what had been laid to his charge. No; it is as though he said: Be it so; suppose I were the hard man, reaping where I have not sown, "thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." Now here, my children, we have a great truth. We all know that Confession is a Sacrament of which the chief end is, that by the mouth of a miserable Priest, yet none the less Christ's Vicegerent, His faithful people, if they truly repent, may not only believe, but know, that they are forgiven. But there are other, lesser, uses. Here the Lord says, If you did not know what to do with your talent, how to lay it out to the best advantage, there are many exchanges to tell you. And so, when you do not know how best to employ what God has given you, you can scarcely do better, even in that point of view, than ask those who must, hundreds of times, have heard the same difficulties, been witnesses of the same fight, felt the same trials.

"Take, therefore, the Talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten Talents."

And here is a great lesson. It always must be that they who have the one Talent, like ourselves, far outnumber those who have the five. Therefore, more of us will fail to employ that Talent well, than those who have more. That, no doubt, is why our Lord makes the servant to whom least was intrusted to fail most.

And now, one last word. Remember that at your several homes you have God's work equally to do, as when here. Several of you have younger brothers and sisters to influence for good; most of you have one or both parents to be Christian daughters to. Whatever you do as girls now, is only preparing the way for your work, should God spare you, as women. Now then in keeping watch over yourselves, in patience, in obligingness, in modesty, and last in order, but first in place, in your own prayers, try so to behave that those around you may do as it is recorded of the elders in the Acts, "they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

The Crown of Life

BY REV. WILLIAM BRUCE, M.A.

"I will give thee a crown of life."—Revelation ii. 10.

If you had been with me some years ago, you might have seen, on the stairs of the Tower of London, a large and, seemingly, happy throng—and among them a little boy, whose bright eye and quick step told he was bent on some task, which yet was not a task to him. He was about to explore the Tower, to see all its wonders; but one, in particular, he longed to see. For this, the lions, and the tigers, and the serpent, and the soldiers, and the arms of all nations and times, were as nothing. If you had approached near enough, you might have heard him say, "The crown—the crown of the king! that is all I want to see. Oh! what is it like? Oh! how does it shine?" This made his eye bright and his step quick, and he pushed through the throng with almost more than the strength of a child.

I cannot for a moment doubt, that if I could now say to you, "Come with me, and I will show the crown—the crown which our gracious King wore on Coronation Day, all glistening with its jewels and precious stones," I cannot doubt, I say, but that a peculiar joy would thrill through every heart, and beam in every eye. How anxious would you be to mark it—how curious to examine it—how eager to touch it!

My dear young friends, I am free to confess, this I cannot do; *but I am bold to say*, more—far more—than this, I am come here to do to-day.

I am not come, indeed, to show you a crown which you may only look at—but must not touch, much less claim or attempt to wear (for that would be treason, and your life would be the forfeit of your crime); but I am come, God helping me, to show you a crown which you may look at—which you may handle—which you may claim—which you may put on your own head—and not only so, but which, if you do not put on, you are guilty of treason against the King of kings, and against your own soul.

This is the crown of which our blessed Redeemer speaks, when He says, "I will give thee a crown of life."

A glorious crown indeed! so glorious, that it takes four crowns—four glorious crowns—to make it.

I. THE CROWN OF THE COVENANT.

It is spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel, xvi. 8. "I entered into covenant with thee," saith the Lord God, "and thou becamest *Mine*." Observe, those with whom the Lord enters into covenant, become His property, His inheritance—"thou becamest *Mine*." What a glorious privilege so to belong to God! Then if you look at the twelfth verse, you will hear the Lord say, "and I put a beautiful crown on thy head." This crown of the covenant is called "a beautiful crown," and well indeed may it be so called, for it shines with all the condescending grace and love of God!

Oh, what a happy change that is, when in the place of the crown of pride, which has been dashed to the ground, God Himself places upon the head the crown, the beautiful crown, the crown of the covenant.

Perhaps some of you may think you cannot give yourselves up to God, because of your sinfulness. Let me assure you that sinfulness will never be done away until you *do* give yourselves up to Him, Who alone can wash you white in the blood of the covenant (the blood of the Lamb), and put the crown of the covenant on your head. Remember He has said, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Every secret prayer of your heart is heard by Him. He notes it in His book. He will answer it in His time.

II. THE CROWN OF VICTORY.

This is the crown mentioned in Revelation iii. 11, where God says, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Mark that caution.

"that no one take thy crown." It may well excite the liveliest apprehension; it seems to tell us we have an enemy who would snatch from us our glory if he could, and that we are to watch while we walk, and while we work, while we wake, and while we sleep, lest we lose our crown—we are to hold it fast.

This crown is to be won and worn every day—nay, every hour. Jesus says, whoever has it, "shall be made a pillar in the Temple of God, and go no more out; and that the name of God shall be written upon him," *i.e.*, he shall be the Lord's for ever.

Now what does this mean? that we are not to serve sin, but Christ; that we are not to do as the world would have us, but as Christ bids us; that we are not to *fear* Satan, but resist him; not to be overcome by him, but to overcome in the strength, and under the guidance, of the Captain of our salvation. If this be the case, we shall gain a daily victory over our sinful hearts, over our tempers, our habits, our inclinations. Perhaps I shall best stir you up to the conflict, and the victory, by telling you of one who gained it:

There was little Julia, an African girl, who gained a victory over her temper. You know temper is a tyrant and must be mastered. When a little girl's temper masters her, she is changed into the likeness of a devil: when she, by the grace of God, masters her temper, she is a companion for Angels. Nay, more! she walks with the Lord of Angels, the meek and lowly Jesus.

Well, little Julia was walking home from the brook; another little girl met her, and no sooner saw her than she struck her a blow. Julia did not return the blow. As she reached home, while passing through the kitchen, a little boy approached, and struck her a hard blow. She meekly bore the cruel insult; but by this time some of her schoolfellows were by, who said, "Julia, why do you not strike again?" "No," said the dear child, "I will not strike, I will leave it all to God."

Ah, you see she had cast away the crown of pride, and had put on the crown of the covenant, and so God gave her the crown of victory. Once she, like the rest, would have returned a kick for a blow; but now a kiss rather—Admire the change! Give God the praise, and learn, when you are provoked, to "leave it all to God."

III. THE CROWN OF REJOICING.

What is that? St. Paul says, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?" and then he answers his own question by another, "Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" By this he clearly teaches, that the souls which he had won to Christ would be his crown of rejoicing.

Now, among the nations of the east, it used to be a custom for the ambassadors of a king themselves to wear a crown. This is the ambassador's crown—the crown which every one will wear who went forth, as an ambassador for Christ, and by word, by deed, by example, sought to win souls to Christ.

There was the missionary West, who went out as an ambassador for Christ, to North-West America: he found two boys, red Indians; they could not speak his language, he could not speak theirs; but he took them and taught them. Great pains, indeed, did he take with them. Every day, as soon as they could understand each other, he bade them kneel down and pray to God. Would you like to know their prayer? It was a very short one; but it had much meaning in it. This was it—"Great Father, bless me, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then the missionary taught them to read, and next to repeat the Lord's Prayer. He grudged no pains. Why? He sought to win their souls to Christ. He was a great man, and a good man. Why do I call him so? Because he was willing to become nothing for Christ. The crown of pride had been dashed from his head, he had learned to stoop, and he did not care how low he stooped, so that he might but pick up a jewel to sparkle in his Saviour's diadem.

Salvation

BY RIGHT REV. JOHN GREGG, D.D.

"*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude*," *etc.—Revelation vii. 9, 10.*

Here were a great many people. We have a great many people in church to-day; but you could count them. If there were persons at the door, you could easily count them. You could count all the people in Dublin—all the people in Ireland; but there were so many in this multitude that nobody could count them, and they were all happy, because they were all holy. Do you know what it is to be holy. It is to be in Jesus Christ, to have the Holy Spirit, to hate what God hates, and to love what God loves. It is to like to be with God, and to be fit to be with Him. They were all happy (you like to be happy), and they were all holy (do you like to be holy?) and are all to be happy and holy for ever.

God is called the happy God; children, be godly, and you will be happy. "Where is God?" some little boys were once asked. "In Heaven," said one; "In earth," said another; "He is here," said a third. "How many gods are there?" said the teacher. "One," said a little boy. "Is there none other?" said the teacher. "No," said the boy; "there can be no other." "Why?" said the teacher. "Because," said he, "there is room for no other, as God says, 'Do not I fill Heaven and earth?'" This boy thought about God. God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God loves all people—that is, pities them, and has good-will to them. He can save people from sin, keep them from hell, and bring them to Heaven. What is the way to be saved from sin, from hell, and to get into Heaven? Can you tell me? The way to be saved from sin, and from hell, and to get into Heaven, is (never forget it) Jesus. "I am the way (He says), the truth and the life." If you are in this way—that is, in Jesus—you shall not be sent to hell, you shall not live in sin, but you shall get into Heaven. What shows you this way? and what shows you how to get into this way? If there was a way, and you did not know it, how could you get into it? If the night was very dark, and you wanted very much to go to some place, but could not see the way, what would you do? If there was a lantern in the house, would you not put a candle into it, and take it with you, that you might find the way? This is a dark world; you cannot see your way through it, so as to get to Heaven; but God has kindly given you a lantern and a light to show you the way, and how to get into the way. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me."

If you have a Bible, you can read of "the way"; and if you are in church on Sunday, you can hear of "the way." When in church, you are not to be thinking about your tops and your balls, your toys and your dolls, as some little boys and girls do; but you are to go there to worship God, and to learn how to please Him, how to be like Him, how to be kept from hell, and how to get into Heaven.

What would you think, children, of a maid, to whom her mistress entrusted a dear little girl and her clothes, to be taken care of? The mistress says to the maid, "Be very careful of this my dear child; mind her clothes also." The maid receives the child and the clothes; she allows the child to run about when and where she pleases, and never looks after her; but she takes the best care of the clothes; she washes them, irons them, and makes them up very nicely; she looks at them every morning and evening, and leaves the child to take care of herself. The little girl gets outside the gate, plays about, picking up flowers and going after butterflies; she loses her way, falls into a